

12 November 1963

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LAOS WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT
(Information as of 1000 EST 12 November)

I. Political

A. Premier Souvanna hopes to win Pathet Lao back into full participation in his coalition government:

1. Souvanna has expressed a desire to effect a reconciliation with the Pathet Lao. In a recent statement, the neutralist premier said he would again propose that the seat of the coalition government be shifted--at least temporarily--from Vientiane to Luang Prabang. Both Prince Souphannouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit, the two Pathet Lao ministers in the coalition, have objected to working in Vientiane on the grounds that their safety was not assured as long as the city remained under rightist control. Although a similar proposal by Souvanna had been rejected by Souphannouvong last August, the neutralist leader apparently is optimistic that with Soviet support he will be able to persuade the Pathet Lao to accept his present plan.

2. In a preliminary move toward a renewal of negotiations, Souvanna on his return to Laos issued an invitation to Phoumi Vongvichit for talks in Vientiane.

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Phoumi Vongvichit has failed to reply to the invitation. Instead, he has renewed charges against the "Savannakhet clique," protested recent attacks on the Plaine des Jarres, and called upon Souvanna to take steps so that "favorable conditions can be created for the settlement of the Laotian question."

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B. Pathet Lao overtures to Kong Le:

1. Leftist leaders apparently are putting out feelers to gauge Kong Le's ideological orientation following his extended stay in the Soviet Union. On 6 November, Pathet Lao General Singkapo proposed a meeting with the neutralist commander for the purpose of initiating a "joint effort" against the nation's "common enemy," i.e., the "US-Phoumiists." Singkapo suggested that the meeting be held on 13 November on the Plaine des Jarres.
2. Kong Le has not as yet replied to this proposal; it is highly unlikely, however, that he could be lured back to the Communist camp at the present time. In recent statements, Kong Le has expressed his firm conviction that the Pathet Lao movement is a pawn of the North Vietnamese and that both Souphannouvong and Singkapo are mere front men with no authority of their own.
3. Earlier, Colonel Deuane, leader of the dissident neutralists, had put out conciliatory feelers toward Kong Le, urging him to "free himself from the US-Phoumi Nosavan grip and pressure" and return to the policy of genuine neutrality and the "correct policy mapped out by the committee of the 9 August 1960 coup d'etat."
4. Deuane's overtures, as well as Singkapo's, are likely to meet with a chilly reception. In mid-October, Kong Le excoriated Deuane as a puppet of the Communists, adding that he would shoot the dissident colonel if the opportunity presented itself.

II. Military

A. Kong Le forces move against enemy positions:

1. On 7 November, Kong Le forces--backed by FAR and Meo units--initiated attacks

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against Pathet Lao and dissident neutralist positions in the Plaine des Jarres area. To the north of the Plaine, Kong Le has claimed successes at Phou Phong [redacted] and Lat Bouak [redacted]. Farther south, neutralist forces reportedly have taken a key position on Route 4, Dong Danh [redacted]. Fighting is also reported in the Xieng Khouang Ville region, with neutralist-rightist pressure being principally directed against enemy positions on Phou Kabow [redacted] and Phou Khe [redacted].

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3. While the neutralist - right-wing offensive has met with some initial success, there are indications that it is running into increasing resistance. An enemy counterattack was reported in the Lat Bouak area on 10 November, and enemy pressure has been stepped up on the Lat Houang [redacted] area. [redacted]

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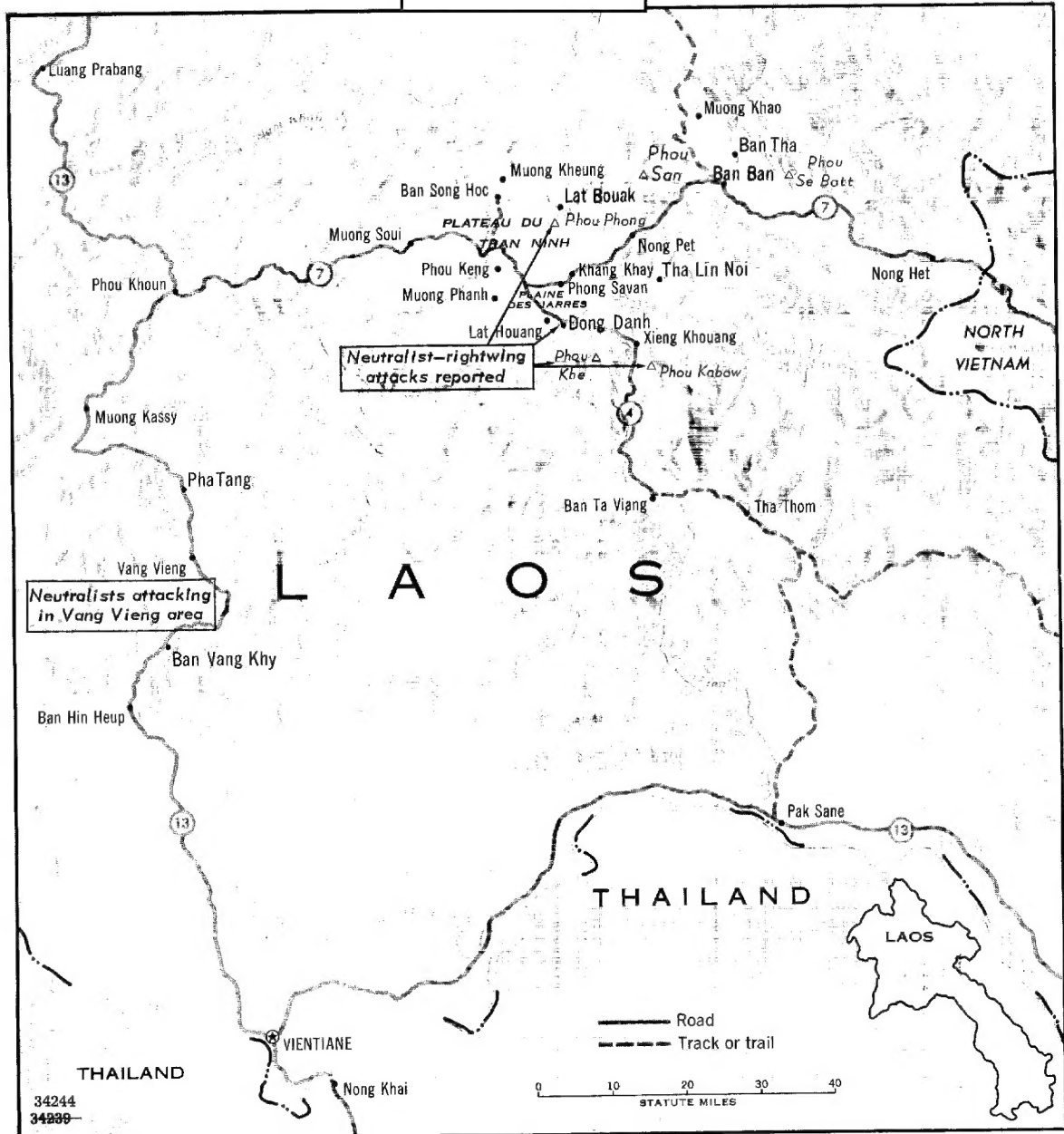
4. On 30 October, right-wing guerrillas in northwestern Laos attacked and captured an enemy supply depot at Muong I [redacted] a Pathet Lao post to the northwest of Muong Sai [redacted]. The guerrillas destroyed an estimated 61 tons of ammunition. (Map)

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